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RAIL TRAVEL NEWS

VOL. 7 NO. 22
SECOND ISSUE OF
DECEMBER 1977
#166

THE TRAIN OF THE YEAR

ON THE COVER

The southbound COAST STARLIGHT, as it should appear when it is re-equipped with Amtrak's new bi-level cars--in a painting by Gil Reid that appears on Amtrak's 1978 calendar. Our cover picture shows about 2/3 of the calendar illustration--a portion of one sleeping car behind the diner does not appear here. The six cars depicted in the painting, being pulled by F40PHR engines 278 & 271, are 3 coaches, a Sightseer lounge, dining car, and sleeper. The train is identifiable by the line number 1130 near the central exterior door of the sleeper. This is the official paint scheme recently adopted for the new cars to come from Pullman Standard. The Amtrak calendar is available for $3.75 from Amtrak Calendar, c/o Western Folder, 850 W. Fullerton Ave., Addison IL 60101.

LETTERS

Your comments and suggestions in "Action 78" (last issue) were excellent. While I haven't written my local Congresswoman lately, it appears it is time to speak up again. Hopefully others will be similarly stirred. Between public lethargy and government policy by accountants (as noted in Reistrup's recent testimony (1st Nov RTN & also Railway Age Dec 12), Amtrak could be reduced to its Northeast Corridor only.

Norman K. Johnson
San Bernardino, California

There is a glorious typo on page 19 of the 1st Nov issue of RTN. Describing Senator Schweiker's request for President Carter's Administration to electrify the Conrail main line between Harrisburg and Pittsburgh, this line appears: "The 25-mile line is heavily used." I realize our Pennsylvania map must appear tiny to a Californian, but it is still 250 miles between Harrisburg and Pittsburgh--the line, of course, that snakes up thru the Alleghenies via Horseshoe Curve, after following the Susquehanna and Juniata River valleys for some incredibly beautiful miles! Come see us sometime! We'll show you some first class railroading, including 4 E's on the point of an 18-car BROADWAY!

Robert W. Holmes
Mount Union, Pennsylvania

The "Action 78" editorial (last issue) is excellent. It must be taken to heart by rail supporters if Congress is to be prevented from eliminating long distance passenger trains--which is obviously the idea behind this "zero-based" verbal smoke screen.

James E. Cane
San Francisco, California

I think you are becoming paranoid about Washington wanting to retain only the Northeast Corridor. The data of Mr. MacDonald (last issue) ignore the fact that there are other corridors around the country presently operating.

Robert T. Clark
Sanford, Florida

(Editor's note: We dearly love the Northeast Corridor, tho we were last there in April, 1976--see "The day Amtrak became a railroad", 2nd Mar 1976 RTN--and incidentally we traveled via the Horseshoe Curve to get there. It's an entirely different sort of railroad from the rest of the Amtrak system, and we would be the first to fight for it if it were in jeopardy. However, the Corridor is not being threatened this time. The rest of the Amtrak system is being threatened, and we dearly love it, too. This is not paranoia, but fact, as Amtrak officials can verify. In his financial analysis of the Amtrak system (last issue), Mr. MacDonald did take into account all the corridors of the nation. The first four of his five categories included all U.S. corridor operations.)

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Traveler's Trots? Portable water distiller with nylon carrying case. Many other home and commercial uses. Mr. Moist, Box 434A, Royal Oak, Mich. 48068.

Feb. 18-19: "Shasta Daylight" special to operate Oakland to Eugene and return, northbound Saturday & southbound Sunday, sponsored by Pacific Railroad Society, Inc. Connecting service from L.A. by private cars on the Coast Starlight. All-inclusive fares from $198. Brochure: PRS, Box 70, East Irvine, CA 92650.

CHESAPEAKE & OHIO 1978 Calendar. 13 steam and diesel photos on appointment style calendar including 7 passenger train scenes, Mountains, Hudson, streamlined Hudson, Pere Marquette steam and diesel psgr. fold out to 11x17. $3.00 or $3.50 via First Class. C&O Historical Society, Box 417, Alderson WV 24910.

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COMING SOON: RTN's long-awaited First Rail Travel Yearbook. Look for announcement in these pages. If you have already ordered your $3.50 copy, yours will be shipped promptly when off the press, in order received. This limited edition is to be the first in a series of Yearbooks that historians, railfans, transportation workers and librarians will want to keep handy for reference purposes. Published by Message Media, Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

RTN ADVERTISING RATES: Express Ads $1.00 per line of 80 spaces. Display ads (camera-ready) $1.25 per square inch. Rail Travel News, Box 9007, Berkeley 94709

LAST CALL TO Rate The Trains

Last chance to submit your ratings of trains ridden between July 1 and December 31, 1977 for RTN's sixth semi-annual reader survey. Use form on next page (or make your own) and in each blank put your rating on a 1-9 scale (1 = extremely poor, 9 = extremely good; 5, mid-point of scale, = average, acceptable). Results will be published as soon as possible.

Send to: RAIL TRAVEL NEWS, BOX 9007, BERKELEY, CALIF. 94709

RTN'S TRAIN RATING FORM

NAME & ADDRESS:

.....

.....

.....

Can we use your name? _____

DATE RIDDEN	A Overall	B Non-food Crew	C Food Crew	D Food Quality	E Car Condition	F Routing	G Stations	H Track	I Scheduling	J Promotion	K Type of Cars	COMMENT SYMBOL*
TRAIN NAME & NUMBER												1
												2
												3
												4
												5
												6
												7
												8
												9
												10
												11
												12
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	

*COMMENTS: to add comments, copy circled number on separate sheet, write train name after it, followed by your comments.

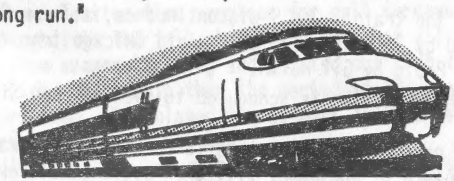
See reverse of form for full instructions.

CARTER CHARGED WITH SHORTCHANGING TRANSIT

In one of the year 1977's major statements on public transit, the Wall Street Journal on Dec 30 published on its editorial page an article by transportation writer Albert R. Karr, entitled "Mass Transit Gets Short Shrift."

The article accuses President Carter and his aides of placing too little emphasis upon mass transit as a means of energy conservation. According to Karr, Transportation Secretary Adams realizes the value of transit in an energy-scarce world, but finds it not "politically feasible" to push the idea. A good part of Adams's failure to sell the idea, according to Karr, is President Carter's own personal dislike for mass transit, and "particularly rail lines." Carter has said that many transit systems are "grossly overdesigned", and Karr reports that Carter has called subway tunnels "an anathema." Some Senators and Congressmen, reports Karr, have personally chided Carter for "missing the boat" on mass transit.

Karr lists a number of reasons that make mass transit a good investment for the nation. Among them is the more compact urban development that follows after fixed transit systems. Concludes Karr: "So when it comes to waging 'the moral equivalent of war', it seems only sensible to use every weapon available--expanded public transportation, along with more efficient cars, better insulation of buildings, and the like. Mass transit deserves more consideration than the Carter administration has given it, if the President cares about conserving energy for the long run."



AMTRAK TRAINS SPEEDED IN JAN. 8 SCHEDULES

With Amtrak's Jan 8 schedule changeover, the rail corporation speeded up the times of 27 trains, it announced Jan 4. Trains involved and savings in time are: INTER-AMERICAN 1hr north, 15min south, by cutting St. Louis station time; NATIONAL LIMITED 1hr eastbd, by track work and staying on Dayton route; SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR 55min each way, new contract with UP; PIONEER 40 min each way, new UP contract; EMPIRE STATE EXPRESS (formerly WATER LEVEL EXPRESS) 30 & 25min, track work; SALT CITY EXPRESS 20 each way, track work; LAKE SHORE LIMITED 20 w.b., 15 e.b., track Albany-Boston; SUNSET LIMITED 15 each way, SP contract change; STATE HOUSE 15 each way, P30 loco restrictions off; ANN RUTLEDGE 10 each way, ditto; ADIRONDACK 10 n.b., reduced customs time; 3 Albany-NY trains each way, 10 min each way, track work.

Other major changes include another schedule flip-flop for the FLORIDIAN, with a night-day-night schedule now, for better Chicago connections, better Florida hours and daytime schedules in Birmingham and Montgomery. An overnight schedule for the SHENANDOAH is adopted, leaving Washington 7:40pm and leaving Cincinnati 7:20pm. Weekend BLUE RIDGE schedules are adjusted. The SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR changes now permit connections to the PIONEER both ways in Ogden and more eastbound Chicago connections, including the BROADWAY and LONE STAR. In New Orleans a connection from the PANAMA LIMITED to the SUNSET is now possible. The SHENANDOAH now connects to Florida trains. The HILLTOPPER now runs thru from the Virginias to Boston (and vice versa), as the NIGHT OWL equipment is simply run thru south of Washington DC. The NIGHT OWL/HILLTOPPER extension gives the developing Washington-Richmond VA corridor 5 trains daily each direction, and Amtrak said the resumption of the CHAMPION in April will bring that total to six.

A new systemwide timetable reportedly will be issued for Jan8, the first one since Jun 22, 1977.

URBAN-SUBURBAN TRANSIT

FOUR MONTHS BEFORE the train's Jan 9 discontinuance, a 7-car Conrail Valparaiso commuter train, hauled by 3 CR diesels, pulls into Chicago from Valparaiso on a September, 1977 day. Photo by Gil Hulin.

THE WASHINGTON DC Metro system is scheduled to open its new Silver Spring line on February 6.

THE BUDD COMPANY'S new SPV2000 RDC car is to be unveiled in Washington sometime in January. The new piece of equipment will then begin a nationwide tour. The Budd Company's stock was reported selling rapidly on Jan 6, with price rising, amid advance word that the company may be bought out by an undisclosed purchaser.

UMTA'S NEW MANAGER Dick Page was recently in Honolulu to inspect the alignment of a proposed 23-mile rapid transit system. The state transportation director opposes the $750-million project and calls for bus freeway lanes, while the city transportation director defends the proposal. It would start with a 14-mile line.

EDMONTON RAPID TRANSIT construction manager Don MacDonald was recently one of 6 finalists for the position of manager of the Portland OR Tri-Met transit system. The new manager, the only one of the 6 with no city transit experience, coming from an Eastern airline, will get consultant assistance from MacDonald.

SECRETARY BROCK ADAMS announced on Dec 23 the awarding of a $761,800 grant to Houston TX to help finance preliminary design of a Downtown People Mover. The proposed DPM is a 1.098-mile system on a north-south corridor in downtown, connecting to the outlying developments of Cullen Center, Allen Center, Market Square and the County Courthouse.

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY in Chicago will negotiate with the Rock Island to obtain much of its commuter line, came a Jan 1 announcement.

THE ROAD INFORMATION Program (TRIP), an arm of the highway lobby, is claiming that buses are as safe and efficient as trains. The organization claims 120 passenger miles a gallon for buses, autos and trains 50 psgr miles, and planes less than 20. These figures contradict most authoritative data now in print. Most studies show trains much more efficient than autos, and tied with or exceeding bus fuel efficiency.

DAN RYAN ELEVATED commuter train line in Chicago had a one-mile section closed Jan 4 for examination after a support girder was found to have large cracks in 3 beams. All girders on the line are being tested, and the closure is causing half-hour commuting delays to almost 150,000 riders daily.

AC TRANSIT STRIKE that began Nov 21 in San Francisco's East Bay remains unsettled. AC Transit General Manager Alan Bingham died suddenly in his office on Jan 3. The bus system is widely regarded as one of the best-managed transit systems in the U.S.

BART SATURDAY SERVICE officially began permanently on Jan 7, tho it had run during the holidays for shoppers. Saturday fare limits are 50¢ one way in January to stimulate patronage. Trains run 9am-midnight. There is no Sunday service.

RAIL CANADA

CANADIAN CITIZEN LOBBY Transport 2000 in a Dec 16 newsrelease was strongly critical of plans to cut back service on the Toronto-North Bay segment of the Ontario Northland Railway's NORTHLANDER (see RTN, 2nd Nov 1977 for full details of this train). Said Transport 2000's president Harry Gow, "This sudden change of policy leads us to question the government's commitment to public transportation in the long term, as opposed to short-term political expediency. It would be regrettable if the province were to follow the lead of the federal government in backing away from election-time promises for rail improvements." Ridership had fallen off somewhat in the fall, but Gow noted that all transportation experiences a decline from summer to fall, and pointed out that the service actually has shown 80-90% higher ridership than the period in 1976, on the segment where service is to be reduced. Gow blamed the cutback on CN's "exorbitant" charges for use of its track south of North Bay.

UNREASONABLY HIGH FEES are being charged Amtrak for the use of Montreal's Central Station, Transport 2000 president Harry Gow revealed in December. In addition, he said, VIA Rail Canada will be charged for maintenance of rolling stock almost twice the actual cost of the service. Both these facts, as well as the impasse in the renegotiation of a contract with GO Transit are blamed by Gow on Canadian National's "gouging" other agencies as well as the traveling public when it finds itself in a monopoly position.

MAYOR OF VANCOUVER has told reporters that the city will have to "go it alone" on construction of a light-vehicle rapid transit system if aid is not soon received from the B.C. provincial government. Victoria cabinet ministers recently announced $430 million in new road projects but a delay for any rapid transit funding.

ALTHO CANADIAN NATIONAL is abiding strictly by the "no new passenger cars" rule laid down by CN President Robert Bandeen, the CN passenger car rehabilitation program continues in full swing, with CN spending up to $250,000 per car for repairs and remodling, or about one-third to one-fourth the price of a similar car new. Crews report the rehabilitated cars to be in "excellent" shape.

THE "RUPERT ROCKET", CN trains 9-10 operated to and from Edmonton rather than Jasper on some Christmas holiday trips. Edmonton departures were on Dec 20, 22, 24, 27, 29, 31, and Jan 3. Edmonton arrivals were on Dec 17, 19, 20, 22, 24, 27, 29, 31 and Jan 3.

WATERFRONT SOURCES SAY in Vancouver that CP Rail plans to discontinue its Princess Patricia Alaska cruises (see RTN, First July 1977) following completion of the 1978 season, which calls for departures every 8 days May 15-Sept 28 inclusive. CP is expected to sell the ship, its last passenger-only vessel.

TORONTO GO TRANSIT unveiled its first bi-level commuter cars on Dec 5, and they went on public display for 3 days as several thousand people examined them. The unusual-shaped cars will enter regular service in February. Eighty of the cars will eventually be used.

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS
with
ENDANGERED SPECIES

As the Department of Transportation looks at the Amtrak system in the next few weeks with an eye towards rationalizing it, you can be quite sure that those routes most closely scrutinized will be the ones Amtrak has already threatened to discontinue: the EMPIRE BUILDER, FLORIDIAN, HILLTOPPER, INTER-AMERICAN, LAKE SHORE LIMITED, LONE STAR, MOUNT RAINIER, NATIONAL LIMITED, NORTH COAST HIAWATHA, SAN JOAQUIN, and SHENANDOAH, plus some Northeast RDC runs. Here we present as many reader comments as possible on these trains, taken from our last survey. (Numerical survey results appeared in RTN's Second July 1977 issue.)

EMPIRE BUILDER

"Amtrak eliminated lounge cars on most of its cold winter runs. On-board train employees when asked why no lounge just rolled their eyes and said that they didn't know what Amtrak was doing!--and other much less kind remarks. However, an on-the-ground employee said that it was to reduce train length and thus ease steam line problems. For heaven sakes, why didn't Amtrak (1) clearly explain this to on-board employees so they could tell their passengers, and (2) post notices in the stations explaining the problem. Few people would complain if they knew the reason, but when a train employee just rolls his eyes and says something discouraging about Amtrak management, all that happens is that Amtrak's somewhat tarnished image gets worse" (Reader, St. Paul MN).

"A train of great tradition that is trying its best to live up to the old GN standards. But too many of the GN personnel on the train were grumps of the anti-passenger mold. Train ran 3 hours late because of the SDP40F slow orders" (Jack Barefield, Fort Worth TX).

"The best Amtrak train ridden to date. Friendly personnel, good equipment, including a clean and quiet first class dome lounge--a real plus!" (W. M. Miller, Bethesda MD).

"Practically empty! Clean and in good shape. Forty mph all the way from Twin Cities to Milwaukee, fast south of there. The slow running was exasperating, especially when the ride was not rough" (James E. Dierks, Rochester NY).

"Even during the worst winter in recent history, the train remained comfortable" (Garl B. Latham, Garland TX).

"Enjoyable trip, but just isn't the train it used to be and still could be with a little closer supervision" (Eliot Haycock, Iron River, Michigan).

"Very nice train. However, the hour-after-hour of 40mph or less running is very, very frustrating" (Reader, St. Paul, MN).

"Much slow running, and freight derailment in Minneapolis station put us into Chicago 4½ hrs late. Many connections missed" (Joseph D. Kenty, Cincinnati OH).

FLORIDIAN

"I see why they call it the Flori-dying. No food or coffee on Miami section, just candy and pop--so those passengers fasted until they joined us at Jacksonville. Most were very unhappy and said so. Diner-lounge poorly stocked. Out of most drink mixes by 10pm. Next morning at breakfast, no French toast, hotcakes or potatoes. Second day's dinner served from lunch menu, as there were no dinner items left" (Tom Lindholm, Grand Rapids MI).

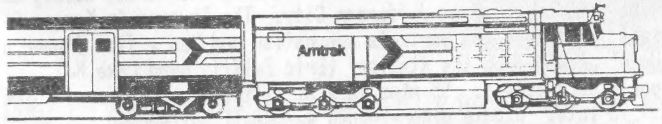
"The route remains a dead loss from Montgomery to Jacksonville, where only great helpings of fine food by an excellent crew made it bearable at all. It

seems that if there were a moderate reduction of equipment problems, track problems and dispatching foulups, a couple of hours could readily be cut from the schedule, allowing terminus arrivals at a reasonable hour of the evening. There were one of each of these problems that were obvious, each costing ½-hour, plus an hour of stops and slowdowns that were probably avoidable. Lounge car attendant was sullen and offensive, a defect commonly found throughout Amtrak. The train really needs to be changed to Chattanooga-Atlanta-Savannah" (Robert Clark, Sanford FL).

INTER-AMERICAN

"Lots of delays all thru Texas and Arkansas--this train goes in the hole even for approaching speeders. This train has so much potential that could be smoothed into avery good train with a little effort by all concerned. Amtrak treats this train like a stepchild, and the MoPac treats it like an illegitimate child. No promotion of this train in Texas whatsoever that I've seen. On return trip, absolutely crept thru Arkansas and we were 5 hours late into Fort Worth. The MoPac is doing all they can to discourage this train. Food and food service was the high point of the train" (Jack Barefield, Fort Worth TX).

"Two-hour late arrival in Dallas. Flor wet, 1-hour stay in Fort Worth to fix brake shoe. Dining steward very unpleasant" (William Stroh, Short Hills NJ).



LAKE SHORE LIMITED

"A popular, well-run operation, but severely affected by the record winter cold during my roundtrip Chicago-Cleveland. Dinner poorly prepared due to an unfamiliar car the crew had to use. On return trip, train 12 hours late at Cleveland and had run out of food near Elyria. Three cars were vacated--rolling ice boxes. The crew handled the situation as well as possible considering the train was full of passengers" (Barry Christensen, Fullerton CA).

"Dining crew outstanding. Steward Mr. Branch and waiter Mr. McGing, even tho they were very busy, both treated us like we were the only ones there and couldn't do enough to please us. Considering that the equipment is about as old as I am, it was nicely refurbished and all air conditioning seemed to work well. Only complaint was that round end observation car was facing forward in middle of consist. It should have been turned and placed on rear to take advantage of fine Hudson Valley scenery" (Kevin Gregoire, Pittsfield MA).

"The crew made this perhaps Amtrak's best train. Having Ray Kindred, fresh off the parlor car from the 4449 steam excursion was an added bonus. The westbound schedule is well-tailored for NY-Cleveland business travel, but the reverse is not so. Albany to Boston seemed extremely slow, but I compared the Feb. 1962 schedule of the NEW ENGLAND STATES with Amtrak's and found the elapsed times between Boston and Pittsfield to be nearly identical. This is another train with fine, but relatively unheralded scenery--the early morning trip down the Mohawk Valley, the evening cruise up the Hudson, the trip over the Berkshires and down the Woronoco River, the wilderness-like appearance of the forests west of Worcester" (Philip E. Stevenson, South Orange NJ).

LONE STAR

"Altho still excellent, every time I ride this train I am saddened to think how it has deteriorated since Santa Fe days" (Duane Roller, Waterloo, Ontario).

"The hi-level coaches make it an attractive train, but the lack of publicity and the poor routing south of Fort Worth are severe drawbacks. A direct Houston/Dallas route is needed as well as more convenient timings at Kansas City" (Perry Huntoon, Houston TX).

"Conductor was annoyed at having to put me on for short trip Joliet-Chicago. Restrooms in my coach were not functioning" (Barry Christensen, Fullerton CA).

"No one was at the ticket counter in Dallas because they were working baggage and freight" (William Stroh, Short Hills NJ).

NATIONAL LIMITED

"Nice diner with excellent crew, old parlor car served very well as lounge, and 5 of 6 New York coaches were clean and comfortable. One NY coach ran steaming hot and the Washington coach was a total disaster. It was completely full, very dirty with broken seats that reclined 1½ inches with no leg room at all. It had a nauseating odor to it. We were fortunate to get a bedroom to get out of it. We got to Harrisburg an hour late and they ran the Washington section by way of Philadelphia to make us 2 hours late. Train crew had no idea why we went thru Philadelphia. The train was late because MoPac freights again blocked it from entering the St. Louis station. Then we lost a bit more trying to cool the hot car. The Washington-bound passengers were dumbfounded by the treatment received. Needless to say, the Amtrak message came across loud and clear: 'We do not want you!' It's a shame" (Intis Vanags, Herndon VA).

"Not an exciting train, but the trip was pleasant and relaxing. We actually arrived early in St. Louis, but became one hour late on the MoPac, mainly due to the Amtrak engine needing water at Jefferson City. The layover in Kansas City was very pleasant, as I took the porter's suggestion and had a fine dinner at the Crown Center Hotel across from the station" (Eric Zeliff, Budd Lake NJ).

"Adhered poorly to schedule. 55 mins late at Effingham, where we met the W.B. train running 1:40 late. Single diner-lounge was small but worked out about right for requirements. No calls for meals. Went for lunch at 2pm and was made to feel that I was quite an imposition at that hour. Dirty, scratched windows on cars. St. Louis station looks like the remains of a battlefield and is dark and dirty" (Ralph E. James, Watsonville CA).

NORTH COAST HIAWATHA

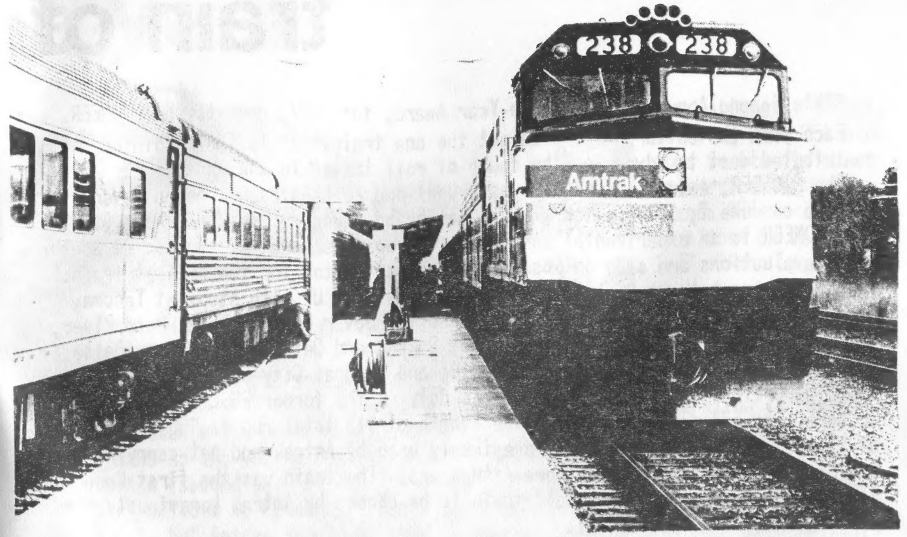
"Here is a train that would make any railfan happy--and the domes are an absolute joy! But the BN had their slow orders on the SDP40F's and we ran 4½ hours late into Seattle. My sleeper was dandy fine--rode smoothly--and the attendant was in his last year before retirement and knew what the word 'service' means. They ought to hire him as a professor at Amtrak school. Dining car crew and food were very good indeed--but the snack bar was opened only when the urge struck the attendant. But the domes--ah the domes--I hate to see them go. Surely someone can tell the designer what a pleasure it is to see what's happening 360° front and back of the train. Lots of passengers at all stops--untapped potential here too. Poor scheduling to go thru the Cascades at night" (Jack Barefield, Ft. Worth).

"Fine scenery along with a delicious breakfast thru the mountains of Western Montana. Too many slowdowns and stops when there seemed to be no reason. Too much Lexan in the dome cars; each one seemed to be a different color; the few good windows left could have used some cleaning. Fine scenery east of Butte. Arrival in Fargo was over 3 hours late" (Frank Florianz, Allston MA).

"I was surprised, but it is true (as indicated in your last survey), the NORTH COAST is a cut above the EMPIRE BUILDER. Enthusiastic young crew--both male and female; and a fantastic effort by BN mechanics in Minneapolis transformed our hot diner into a pleasant cool diner for trip Minneapolis-Seattle. Best scenery of the northern routes" (Eliot Haycock, Iron River MI).

"The worst Amtrak train I have ever ridden. Creeping along lousy BN track getting 8 hours late--without explanation or apology from Amtrak. Sleeping car porter unbelievably lazy--would not clean room, bring clean towels or make beds unless asked. Steward indifferent, diner crew o.k. but inexperienced and poorly trained. Air conditioning didn't work in any car" (Tom Smith, Wilmington DE).

"Dining car steward was very rude! He turned away many people from the diner. Some of the people he cussed out in the diner said they would never ride Amtrak



The two FLORIDIAN sections join up at Jacksonville in this Sept 1977 shot by Gil Hulin. St. Pete-Jax train 56 waits at left as Miami-Jax train 94 rolls into Clifford Lane Station. Train will continue to Chicago with Miami section's engines (an F40 and E8B).

again. I have never seen any Amtrak ads in any Montana, Idaho or North Dakota newspapers" (Bob Keene, Livingston MT).

SAN JOAQUIN

"What a difference the Amfleet makes! This is truly a fine train ride. However, 156 passengers made things a bit crowded" (Bud McMahon, Sonoma CA).

"The bus connection Bakersfield-L.A. was even worse than usual, with some thoroughly unpleasant drunks on board, one of whom set himself on fire during the bus ride. Ugly. If Bakersfield is to be a 'designated end point' in Amtrakese, it could use a station. The trailer beside the tracks is not really adequate. The train should go all the way over the Tehachapis like it used to. I do not like the Amcoach cars on this train at all. Amtrak has traded all the advantages of the good old standard chair cars for all the disadvantages of an airplane fuselage: lack of head room, lack of foot room in window seats due to curved wall, lack of leg room, small foot rest. Worst of all are the tiny windows. Why take the train if you can't see anything? Some seats have a solid wall area with no window at all. Finally, why does it take such a ridiculously long time to move the train from SP to Santa Fe tracks? It can't be THAT difficult a maneuver" (David Eakin, Richmond CA).

"SP-Santa Fe switching is awfully slow. Thru train to L.A. much preferred. My hamburger was terrible! Microwave system no good for this. Amfleet cars are superior except for small windows" (Reader, Menlo Park CA).

SHENANDOAH

"A pleasant short ride but a very long ride from end to end. On ride over the entire route, the crew opened the 84-seat car instead of the 60-seat one. Having an Amlounge instead of an Amcafe would have made up for it, but that wasn't the case. This route cries out for an Amfleet-compatible dome car. If it can be done with sleepers, it can be done with domes" (Ron Goldfeder, Ft. Myer VA).

"Excellent service by crew. Amcafe food is poor quality; dinner prices are much too high for what you get. Nice view of mountains. Amdinette seats are nice" (Mr. & Mrs. Michael Burshtin, Richland NJ).

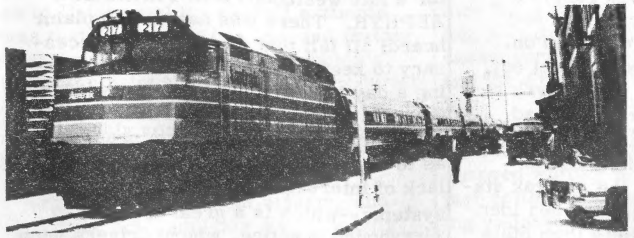
train of the year

RTN's Second Annual Train-of-the-Year Award, for 1977, goes to the PIONEER.

Each year the editors of RTN select the one train that in their opinion has contributed most to advancing the cause of rail travel in the past year.

The PIONEER, Amtrak trains 25 (westbound) and 26 (eastbound) began revenue service on June 7, 1977, after a 3-day eastbound inaugural run on June 4-6. The PIONEER is an experimental service to be run under that status for 24 months while evaluations are made on possible permanent status for the Amfleet train. The train runs between Seattle WA and Salt Lake City UT with stops at Tacoma, East Olympia, Centralia, Kelso-Longview and Vancouver WA; Portland, Hood River, The Dalles, Hinkle, Pendleton, La Grande, Baker, and Ontario OR; Nampa, Boise, Mountain Home, Shoshone, and Pocatello ID; and Brigham City and Ogden UT. In the Seattle-Portland corridor it does double duty as the former PUGET SOUND, with one or more cars added for that leg. The length of its total run is 1081 miles, most of it on Union Pacific track not previously used by Amtrak and not carrying regular passenger trains since the pre-Amtrak era. The train was the first Congressionally-legislated "experimental" train to be chosen by Amtrak (previously the choices were made by the DOT).

The PIONEER experience inspires rail passenger advocates by the big successes the train has scored right off the bat. Public response to the new train has been strong, even tho little advertising has appeared along the route. Patronage has been high, even tho there has been a six-year lapse in train service for the run. The new train is a tribute to regional workers who strived hard to get service re-established. Particular plaudits should go to Idaho Senator Frank Church and Mrs. Church for their unstinting efforts to get the service going--and to many others, including members of the Oregon Association of Railway Passengers, who put a great deal of effort into the project.



The westbound PIONEER, carrying some 250 persons in its six cars, is serviced at La Grande OR shortly before noon on Dec 23, 1977. Glenn Lee photo.

The service is also worthy of note because it is the first new long-distance route initiated by Amtrak entirely in its own fashion, using its new Amfleet cars and taking experimental steps to demonstrate that economy of operation is possible even on such a big undertaking. Even tho the train is only about 7 months old, it ranks as the second most financially sound long-distance service in the Amtrak system (second only to the Boston-Newport News COLONIAL/SENATOR), in terms of ratio of deficit to revenues. There are complaints about the quality of the Amfleet food, but Amtrak should be able to improve this as time goes on. Amfleet compatible sleeping cars were promised for last fall, and now Amtrak says that they will finally be going on the train in April. This move should do much for the quality of the run and for the general public acceptance of the service.

In honor of this train and of all the people who made its existence possible, we present here a new account of its operations, during the past Christmas season. The full account of the train's inaugural appeared in our First June 1977 issue. Our train-of-the-year last year was the LAKE SHORE LIMITED (see RTN, Second December 1976).

CHRISTMASTIME ON BOARD THE PIONEER

by Glenn Lee

Travel westward on board Amtrak's new PIONEER is now thoroughly linked with the RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR, now that the RGZ westward connects with the PIONEER three times per week in Salt Lake City.

My westward journey began in Glenwood Springs, Colorado, after a short visit there, aboard the RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR, which had carried 175 passengers from Denver on Thursday, Dec. 22. Rio Grande trainmen had expected about 45 on board westbound from Grand Junction; but this number had swelled to 80 due to a large crowd boarding at "the Junction." A total of 18 were for Amtrak's SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR connection at Ogden via the Rio Grande van service, and another five were for the PIONEER at Salt Lake City.

The RGZ trip was as fabulous as ever, and is an experience that none should miss. No matter how good their train, it should not be forgotten that Rio Grande is hostile almost openly to Amtrak, and often the two barely speak to each other. An example of their failure to mesh properly for the benefit of the traveling public is the fact that there are <u>two</u> rail depots in Salt Lake--one for Rio Grande and one for Amtrak--despite the fact that the two are about a quarter-mile apart.

Our RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR arrived in Salt Lake some 13 minutes early at 9:17pm, and myself and others awaiting taxis were at the curb in front of the building by 9:20pm. At 10pm we were still awaiting arrival of a cab, despite many personal calls, and supposedly that of the Rio Grande stationmaster.

One of the senior-citizen couples waiting for a cab was from Denver en route to Pocatello. When they had inquired of service from Salt Lake City to Pocatello at the Rio Grande agency in Denver, they were told: "We can take you to Ogden, but we cannot guarantee any connection to Pocatello beyond that point." They were amazed to find that there was a "connecting" Amtrak train to Pocatello, and were upset that Rio Grande had not informed them of the PIONEER.

At 10pm the crowd awaiting a taxi for the Amtrak station grew restless, fearing that the 10:40pm departure would be missed. The aggravation grew, as we could see the markers of the PIONEER from the Rio Grande's cabstand. So near, yet so far away!

I commandeered a Rio Grande baggage cart and somewhat forcefully told each person to put his bag on the cart, and I would push it to the other station. Immediately a strange group of travelers set out thru the darkened streets of the Salt Lake warehouse district. One woman told me she felt I was a lifesaver, as her husband had heart trouble and would never have been able to carry their bags to the other depot.

Progress was slow. With one lady stationed at either side forward of the cart, we were able to prevent baggage from falling into the street at bumps in the pavement or at railroad tracks. I was becoming very irritated at having been forced to make this slow jaunt. Suddenly the cart veered right on the uneven pavement and I shouted "Ladies!" and suddenly there was a rush to the cart to prevent an abrupt unloading of the luggage.

"Now R2D2 wouldn't do that," I said irritably to the cart. This raised a short laugh among the travelers and broke the tension; and we pushed on. About 20 minutes after we had set out, and only one block from the Amtrak station, a car drove up with what I had earlier thought to be a Rio Grande employee whom I had asked for aid in transfering the group to the Amtrak station. He told a few jokes and then identified himself as an off-duty Utah State Highway Patrolman, and offered aid--which was declined, as we were now only a few hundred feet from the rear car of the PIONEER.

We pushed the cart to trainside. Altho we were bound for points such as Pendleton and Hinkle, Oregon--longer distances --train attendants told us we must take seats in the more cramped 84-seat cars, located forward. It was a 6-car train, with locomotive 217 pulling cars 21171, 21262, 21860, 20220 (Amdinette), 21866, and 21868.

Before settling down in my 84-seat Amcoach, I pushed the Rio Grande cart into the depot and told the Amtrak agent that this cart belonged to Rio Grande, that he should see that it was returned; and then explained how we had pushed it thru the street, and urged him to "do something" so that other travelers were not caught in the same "mess." He paled a moment and then said that he was sure he could help.

The PIONEER departed at 10:42pm, two minutes late, and the problems of the Salt Lake transfer rapidly faded on board the beautiful Amfleet cars. The train was slow in getting out of town, and then did not show the usual speed en route to Ogden. A bit of discussion with the conductor convinced all concerned that Hinkle, Pendleton and The Dalles patrons indeed merited seats in the 60-seat coaches; and soon we were moved to the more spacious cars.

Our PIONEER trip would be heavily patronized, with up to 270 people aboard at any one time. As on other long distance runs, the business is mostly to and from intermediate points, with only a few persons traveling the entire length.

Our arrival in Ogden was 11:54pm. Departure, scheduled for 11:35, was not

to be until 1:42am! We were to be held for a late westbound SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR. There was nary a complaint heard; all felt that the delay was necessary to keep many SFZ riders from being a day late on their Christmas journies. Any irritation was directed at the failure of the crew to inform passengers as to the reason for the delay, and the lack of interest in using the Amfleet P.A. systems--which is a great contrast to Greyhound practice, where drivers seem almost eager to use their own P.A.

Life in the Ogden depot wasn't much better. A crowd of 70-80 persons lounged in various states of disrepair. Nowhere was any set of "revised" arrival and departure times listed for the public. One was required to stand in line at the ticket window to obtain the information. First the crowd was told that SFZ would arrive 12:50am, and later, 1:20am. Many looked as if they already knew--that once again their lives were being systematically disrupted by "the railway," the many-headed hydra which brought despair to travelers automatically, everywhere.

One of the couples I had helped by pushing baggage thru the Salt Lake streets sat ahead of me in the Amcoach. They were en route from Grand Junction to Pendleton to visit daughter, son-in-law and grand children. Mr. was unhappy about the lack of a connection between the eastbound PIONEER at Salt Lake (arriving 7:45am) and the RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR (which leaves Salt Lake at 7am). "It's the damn railroads for you," he said, and explained that the pair would take Trailways from Salt Lake to Grand Junction on the return trip because of poor RGZ scheduling.

The SFZ No. 5 arrived 1:26am, some 3 hours late. The train had left Chicago late; and had been 3 hours late at Omaha; and had run that late thru Denver to Ogden, with poor weather eliminating chances to make up lost time. Once the thru passengers had transferred, the PIONEER was first out, some 2 hours late.

We made up some time by Pocatello, where arrival was 4:10am and departure 4:15am, 1:25 late. Departure from Mountain Home, scheduled for 5:55am, was 7:04am, or 1:09 late. Our Boise arrival was 7:57am, and departure 8:10,

THE PIONEER

now 1:05 late. A large crowd awaited us at Boise, and my eyeball estimate was that 75 passengers boarded (rather than the 66 shown on the conductor's computer printout. A snowstorm during the night and resultant slick highways had probably conspired to increase train patronage. In some areas there had been sleet.

Arrival at Nampa was 8:42am, and departure 8:47, and now we were only 1:02 late. At Nampa there was much more snow than at Boise. The platform in front of the "glass box" shelter had not been swept of snow, and passengers both coming and going tiptoed gingerly. The Lexan sides of the shelter had already faded noticeably since summer. I noted that one detraining passenger had forced the shelter door open with difficulty, and had to help succeeding passengers open the door to enter. Almost moments before departure, a sleek red sports car drove over the snow on the platform to deposit a sweet senior citizen lady alongside the train, and within seconds she was on board and we were underway.

Near Ontario, at 9:22am, we noted 2 freights in sidings for us. Thus far during the day there had been no use made of the train P.A. system, but near Ontario the speakers said: "Will each of you please take one seat only." The train was growing crowded, and the passengers knew it. The crew said there were 384 seats not counting the "revenue" seats in the Amdinette, and that there might be a "squeeze" somewhere west of Pendleton, as driving conditions between Pendleton and Portland were quite poor due to the storm. The crew said they intended to remove all passengers from Amdinette seats, if necessary, and would leave no intending passengers behind until there absolutely were no more seats on the train.

Departure from Ontario was 9:31am, and we were no 61 minutes late. Departure from the non-listed stop at Huntington, Oregon (a crew-change stop where passengers are handled) was 10:15am, and the PIONEER was now only one hour late.

The Amdinette had been very busy thru the morning, and it was only now that I chanced waiting in line for some breakfast rolls. The one attendant was working valiantly, and passengers speculated that he was a good candidate for hospitalization due to work exhaustion. At my Amdinette booth were a grandmother en route to see her grandchildren in Portland and a jet engine mechanic from Mountain Home employed at the nearby Air Force Base. Grandmother said she was on board the train because she did not like to fly. I said the same. She quizzed the Air Force employee, and he too said that planes made him nervous. With this link of camaraderie established much pleasant breakfast chatter then flowed.

I was displeased to note that the conductor's desk had taken a full Amdinette booth, so that some passengers had to take their breakfasts back to their seats. Later in the day, card players were allowed to monopolize the booths, which was discourteous to those wishing space during the lunch hour.

Our departure from Baker was 10:18 am, now only 38 minutes late. A number of UP freights slipped past in sidings for us between Baker and La Grande. My car was almost full, and one passenger across the aisle, remarking on the beauty of the cars, said: "This car is too full to be bumpy."

Arrival at La Grande was 41 minutes late, and departure 57 late. We had very slow running the last mile to the La Grande depot, aggravating many passengers waiting to leave the train. It was snowing, and the depot platform had

not been swept. Crewmen continued to ignore the train P.A. system, except for one announcement: "Will Mr. Y please come to a train telephone."

After a slow departure from La Grande we proceeded into the Blue Mountains, with increasing snow. At 12:14pm we overtook a westbound freight in Hilgard siding; and at 12:24pm met an eastbound freight in Motanic siding. Despite only one locomotive, the train seemed to climb the steep grade easily, and soon we were slipping down the west slope of the Blues.

Nearby, one passenger told another: "This is sure a friendly train. The engineer even was waving at the crowd when we pulled into Boise this morning." The snow thickened, and this seemed to make the passengers more convivial as we approached Pendleton. There was continuous conversation about the valiant hard work of the lone Amdinette attendant.

A big crowd at Pendleton awaited our 1:46pm arrival. Again, the depot platform had not been swept of snow. And strangely there were no passengers waiting in the glass box shelter. Instead the crowd was huddled under the eaves of the UP brick depot, which is closed to the public. Evidently some had been waiting in the snowy cold for quite some time, with no one on duty to inform the public of delays in the train service. We departed at 1:54pm, 54 minutes late.

The snow lessened somewhat as we arrived at Hinkle, Oregon, where I would leave the train. A large crowd was set off in snow, as once again the platforms had not been cleared. Those waiting for the train do so in parked cars south of the tracks, while passengers leave the train north of them. I thus had to wait several minutes until 2:34pm when the train left 49 minutes late for Portland to see if I had been met.

Indeed I had, and it was only a short drive to the Pasco area to begin celebrating the arrival of Christmas in our fair land of the PIONEER.

TRAINS ARE A PEOPLE BUSINESS

An Amtrak man in Washington was commiserating with a fellow employee after hours. "The real message about trains is not getting across to the decision makers" he lamented. "All they want to talk about are financial statistics. Look, revenues per passenger mile don't write letters to their Congressmen--PEOPLE do! Deficits per passenger mile don't complain to their Senators--PEOPLE do! If only the bureaucrats could look up from their papers and see that the business of Amtrak is serving people! How do you measure the value of a safe, warm train on a snowy winter night carrying a grandmother to a holiday visit with her young grandchildren? How do you assess the dollars-and-cents value of the security and reliability of a train carrying a young woman away to her first year in college? And how about the people who rely on trains to meet new friends as they travel, or to spend time in contemplation of our great countryside or in rap sessions with their fellow voyagers? These things are all part of the quality of life in the United States. How do you make the bureaucrat types see that these things are what Amtrak is all about?"

His companion nodded. "Yes, and when they talk about money spent to support rail passenger service, it's always called a 'loss' or a 'deficit.' Why, look at the Federal Aviation Administration--with 51,000 employees it's the biggest section of the Department of Transportation. But do they consider the expense of that a 'loss'? No. Are millions spent on building an airport considered a loss? No, it's an 'investment.' Are the millions spent on highway building considered a deficit? No, they're an 'investment.' Is the nation's $126 billion defense budget considered a loss? Of course not. But why should passenger trains be singled out as 'money losers'?"

The Amtrak men were dead right, we believe. When the government discusses expenditures it uses inconsistent semantics. During the Nixon administration the Federal Railroad Administration (a section of the DOT)ordered up reporting forms for Amtrak that used these derogatory terms. Some term such as "net costs" should be used instead of "deficits" or "loss" in Amtrak reporting.

Mixed Train of Thoughts

WINTER ROLLS ON: The New Year's weekend saw heavy snowstorms in the Northwest and snow, rain and ice in part of the Southeast. The EMPIRE BUILDER and NORTH COAST HIAWATHA were regularly running hours late due to weather problems and the detour over the Milwaukee Road route in Washington State. On Dec 24, train 7 was running 7½hrs late westbound in Washington State. An F40 engine had failed east of Havre MT, and it was replaced by a small GP unit which couldn't manage the train. That was replaced by a GE "U-boat" at Spokane. The ex-E unit heater cars were running low on water, and at Pasco WA 3 stops were made--for watering, for passengers, and for baggage (the baggage car now on the rear due to cold weather). The Milwaukee Road detour has been adding 1½ hours to the trip each way. Many railroad officials have been seen riding the cabs of the trains on the detour. The EMPIRE BUILDER hasbeen carrying many domes, and a reader quips that it's like an apple tree giving lots of apples the year before it dies! A small item in Northwest newspapers reports that BN has begun repairs to its ex-NP Stampede Pass route over the Cascade Mountains in Washington. Some 20-30 miles were damaged in heavy rains on Dec 1-3 and forced re-routing of the EMPIRE BUILDER over the Milwaukee Road's Snoqualmie Pass route. On Jan 1 train 7 was running 5hrs 47mins late in Washington, sporting 5 domes and powered by two F40PHR engines (244, 249) followed by two heater cars. That train carried 325 passengers into Seattle, as Washington State temperatures plummeted to zero. The NORTH COAST HIAWATHA due in Seattle at 7pm on Jan 2 arrived 14 hours late, at 9am on Jan 3. The EMPIRE BUILDER was reported westbound running 6½ hours late at Libby MT on Jan 3. On Dec 30 the eastbound EMPIRE BUILDER was about 3:40 late at Pasco WA and the westbound train almost 5 hours late..... DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS: in our winter roundup last issue, the LAKE SHORE LIMITED dates given should have been Dec 6 & 7, not 16 & 17 (on page 14).....

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THE PANAMA LIMITED, train 58, on Dec 12 while detouring over the ICG's Tallahatchie District between Jackson MS and Memphis TN via Gwin because of a freight derailment, derailed as it passed thru Johnston Yard (Memphis). The cause was said to be lateral force spread track in a curve. Cars derailing were Amdinette 20236 and Amcoaches 21876, 21880, and 21824, each sustaining about $1400 damage. The train wastraveling at 5mph and there were no injuries. The train was delayed about 4 hours, picking up two coaches from train 59 at Memphis and proceeding on to Chicago. Passengers between Carbondale and Chicago were bused due to lateness. The derailment happened at 4:25am..... 10,000 MORE AUTOMOBILES are added to the roads of the U.S. every day, said the National Wildlife Federation and the Environmental Action Foundation in a joint statement at Christmastime. The two groups called for creation of a national coalition to move away from our "total dependence" on the automobile. The groups have issued a citizens guide to fighting highway projects..... LAKE SHORE LIMITED derailed 6 cars about 6:30pm on Dec 10 eastbound apparently near Albany NY. There were no injuries reported on the 10-car train. Cause was reportedly a steam connector on a baggage car becoming caught in a switch. The track was repaired by the following morning.....

HOW MANY PASSENGERS get turned away due to Amtrak reservations computer foul-ups? Reader Robert Underwood on Dec 27 tried to get reservations on the MONTREALER on Dec 27 to go from Newark NJ to Springfield MA and was told on the free reservation phone and by the Newark agent that the computer showed the train all sold out. He persuaded the agent to sell him an "open" ticket, and once on the train found that there was lots of room. "Crowded tonight?" he asked a conductor. "No, not at all" he replied. This was a common occurrence back in the pre-computer days of privately-run passenger trains, but why now?.....

THE SANTA FE on Dec 23 gave its approval to operation of the EL CAMINO, the Los Angeles-County-owned L.A.-San Diego "commuter" train that has been the subject of dispute for a long time. The railway recommended a Feb 6 startup date, but Amtrak, who will operate the train, isn't sure yet if that date can be met.....

THE SOUTHERN RAILWAY on Dec 3 ran an inspection train from Charlotte NC to Millen GA on the old Central of Georgia mainline, via Columbia SC and Augusta GA. The passengers included President L. Stanley Crane and others from Washington headquarters, Gen'l Manager H.R. Moore of Atlanta (Eastern Lines), Piedmont Division Super't S.E. Hawkins of Greenville SC, Coastal Division Super't L.H. Smith Jr. of Macon GA, several ass't super'ts, trainmasters, track personnel, sales department representatives, and others. Train consist was green-and-gold FP7s 6141 & 6133, coach 1039, research car #1, business car #7, and #19 inspection car "Buena Vista"..... THE PANAMA LIMITED arrived southbound 7 hours late in Memphis on Dec 22 due to a freight derailment in Illinois. The train was carrying sleeper 2933 "Pacific Skies", outfitted with electric components and newly assigned to the train, behind P30 diesel 717 and baggage car 1370, and trailing 9 Amfleet cars behind the sleeper..... AN EXCELLENT ARTICLE on the present Amtrak problem, by William H. Jones, appeared in the Washington Post at Christmastime and was reprinted in a number of other newspapers. It opens: "The United States soon may become the only industrialized nation in the world without railroad passenger services connecting its major cities." Jones says that the FLORIDIAN "appears certain" to be discontinued, "barring a policy shift that would earmark a larger share of the federal budget for Amtrak." He points out that Amtrak's money is not a "major factor" in the current $458.25 billion budget of the U.S.....

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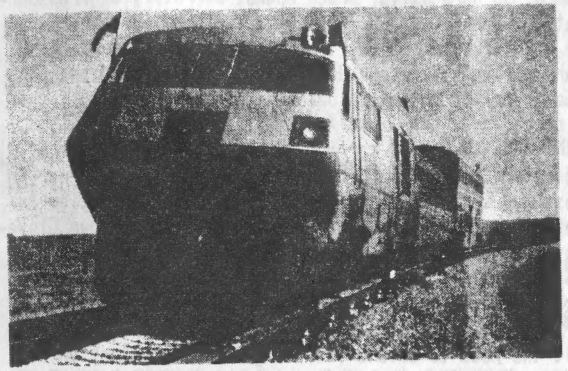
FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION of the DOT reported on Dec 19 that highway receipts by state highway departments and related agencies in 1976 totaled $22.6 billion, which included $1.5 billion in borrowed funds and $6.5 billion in Federal funds. Expenditures totaled $21.4 billion..... A DENVER WOMAN who already has lost her home when Interstate 70 was built over it sees her residence threatened again by a proposed $12 million highway interchange near Stapleton Airport. She told the city council in December she'd "stand with a shotgun" before she'd let it happen again, and other residents were outraged at the prospect of "air and noise pollution and decreased property values" that more auto traffic would bring. They want instead a fixed rail system or shuttle bus to the airport.....

AMTRAK WAS FURIOUS when the ICG issued a press release Dec 20 stating that "Contrary to Amtrak news releases about restoration of dining car service on the PANAMA LIMITED, there is no such service on the trains so far, Amtrak operations personnel at ICG say." Amtrak said that indeed the service had begun, and that ICG has no call to put out Amtrak's press releases for it. Of course, every little bit you can do to discourage rail travel hastens the day when those blasted passenger trains are off your rails, eh?..... CEREAL AND TICKETS: Amtrak isn't the only rail passenger carrier to make a deal with Kellogg's to give free tickets to children with cereal box tops. British Rail has a similar promotion involving Kellogg's Rick Krispies and Corn Flakes which runs until June 26, 1978..... AMTRAK IS CLEANING up garbage and debris from along the Northeast Corridor right of way. Phase I of the cleanup program was terminated for the winter in mid-December. Amtrak pays small contractors to do the work, and so far 350 acres have been cleared. Phase I will eventually cover 806 acres along 101.3 miles of track and will cost $3 million. Phase II later will cover the remaining 286 miles--2,250 acres--and will run $2.3 million..... "WHEEL AND DEAL" is more than a call in square dancing. Amtrak began a "Florida Week of Wheels and Deals" over 5 years ago, and now it says it has been extended to a "Month of Wheels in Florida." The plan is designed for Midwest users of the FLORIDIAN, and for those who used the now-suspended Auto-Train Louisville-Florida service. In conjunction with Airail Rent-A-Car and Days Inns of America, the

program allows unlimited 30-day use of a rental car for $197 and up. The regular week of wheels plan gives a car free for a week, except for gas, taxes and optional insurance for 3 full fares from Chicago or NY to Florida.....

ON-TIME PERFORMANCE of the CARDINAL, nee JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY, was 90.3% in October, Amtrak said, up from 50% a year before. Ridership on the train increased 8.3% from Oct 1976..... LAST ISSUE'S STATEMENT that track work and signal improvement on the SCL's Sanford subdivision would help Amtrak times is disputed by reader Robert Clark, who says that "The only train causing multiple meets in that area, #57, had its schedule flipped Jan 8 to conform with the general flow of traffic. This puts all 4 Amtrak trains southbound into Sanford before 1pm, and all 4 northbounds out after 2:25pm. Except for meets with #57, this has been a fast run for passenger trains. Those 2-mile-long passing tracks are strictly for freight use. What they have had for signals before were the ones left from the days of double track block signals, hooked up to CTC. The new signals are about 3 times farther apart than the old, which were one mile apart. The old track had been maintained for 79mph running, so there won't be any improvement in speed from the continuous rail"..... SOME ISSUES AGO we mentioned the strange sight of an LRC locomotive and coach coupled to a big Amtrak bi-level coach, running on the DOT test track at Pueblo, Colorado. Here's a picture of that weird combination, courtesy of UTU News.....



RUMORS GOING AROUND Washington have it that Southern Railway will apply to the ICC for permission to discontinue the SOUTHERN CRESCENT effective July 1, 1978.....

REBUILT F40PHR ENGINES have been placed on trains 32, 33, 700, 701, 702, 703, 704, and 705, and reportedly will be soon assigned to trains 34, 35, 50, 51, 169, 174 and 176..... IN OUR EDITORIAL section last issue we mentioned the fact that adding trains on selected routes would decrease the Amtrak deficit per passenger miles. This calls for some elaboration. The increased frequencies would obviously have to be on routes that have enough potential to fill the added trains to some acceptable level. The deficit per passenger mile will never reach zero, any more than the small out-of-pocket expenses of operating our little car can pay its share of the roads it runs on. Reader David Ricks, using Joe MacDonald's figures printed last issue, calculated mathematically what would happen to the Amtrak deficit if passenger miles were increased. Extrapolating a curve from the figures given, he found that if Amtrak's passenger miles were doubled, as they easily could be in another oil embargo, the deficit per passenger mile would drop to 7.75¢ (from the current 11.5¢). The lowest it could get according to his curve is 4.5¢. Mr. Ricks says it's obvious that a "larger subsidy would make Amtrak more efficient at its assigned task".....

ICG FILED SUIT in U.S. District Court on Dec 16 in connection with the PANAMA LIMITED derailment in Dyersburg on Nov 25, 1976, in which 30 people were injured, none seriously. The ICG charges a motorist with crashing his car against the track, causing a kink in the rails which caused train 59 to derail a few minutes later. ICG wants $25,000 for track damages and $10,000 for injuries to railroad employees..... JOLIET UNION DEPOT in Joliet IL may be nominated to the National Register of Historic Places, a move opposed by the owner railroads Santa Fe, ICG and Rock Island.....

TOURNAMENT OF ROSES parade in Pasadena CA was held this year on Jan 2. The incoming SOUTHWEST LIMITED was running late and its passage was blocked by the parade, so at San Bernardino the train was renumbered Extra Amtrak 511 West and it detoured over the normally freight-only 3rd District via Colton, Riverside, Corona and thence to the SAN DIEGAN route at Fullerton for the trip into L.A. This is the route used by the GRAND CANYON during pre-Amtrak days. The train made a special stop at Fullerton for San Diego-bound passengers. The train was hauled by engines 511, 517 and 535. Engine 517 apparently had hit a cow or horse along the line and was moved off the point. A similar detour was made on New Year's Day in 1975 when the train was late..... INTERSTATE COMMERCE COMMISSION has denied Amtrak's petition to eliminate sleeping car service on the INTER-AMERICAN.....

* * *

THE STARTUP DATE of Amtrak's forthcoming Sacramento-Los Angeles train is still not finalized, but should come very soon..... "WE'RE ENTERING A very bad time," said an Amtrak man this month. The bad part of it is that the study being made of the Amtrak system is all so hush-hush. Nothing's out in the open. "You should tell your readers to write to the Secretary of Transportation" the Amtrak man said. We didn't give his address before, so here it is: Brock Adams, Secretary of Transportation, Dept. of Transportation, Washington DC 20590..... A LONG ARTICLE by E. M. Frimbo appears in the New Yorker dated Dec 19. It concerns H. Rex Holland, Amtrak's new head of on-board services. Frimbo describes a food-tasting session where the fare of various caterers was being evaluated. Frimbo especially liked some lobster Newburg and a corned-beef dish. No fan of fine travel should miss this article..... NEW YORK TIMES of Dec 27 carried an article describing the COAST STARLIGHT, by Les Ledbetter..... THE OHIO LEGISLATURE and the governor in early January are to be presented with a plan by the Ohio Rail Transportation Authority for a high-speed rail link between downtown Cincinnati and downtown Cleveland, as well as Toledo-Cleveland-Youngstown, Toledo-Columbus and Toledo-Cincinnati..... AMERICAN BUS ASSOCIATION is the new name for NAMBO (the National Association of Motor Bus Owners). This association is launching a concerted media attack on Amtrak at this critical time. Amtrak has never gone about attacking buses, but at this time felt the need to defend itself against the latest onslaught, and sent editors some statistics that defend Amtrak's budgetary needs. Among the more interesting statistics was this: Federal grants to Amtrak have so far averaged $200 million per year. This is equivalent to the cost of building only 5 miles of the Century Freeway in Los Angeles. Where would the Interstate highway system be if it built only 5 miles a year? One more note: 35% of highways have been built with money from general taxes--not all from "user fees".....

TRANSPORTATION SECRETARY ADAMS on Jan 4 announced a "change in the 'concept' of the (Northeast Corridor) program to give better service to all of the corridor's passenger and freight customers." Just what this means is not clear yet.....

News in this issue is updated thru Jan 10 p.m.

What to join

MORE RAIL PASSENGER ASSOCIATIONS (SEE ALSO NEXT PAGE):

Hoosier Association of Railroad Passengers, 1001 E. First St., Bloomington IN 47401.

Wisconsin Association of Railroad Passengers, PO Box 715, Green Bay WI 54305.

ADDENDUM TO FANTRIPS

Jan 14: Sierra RR "Oakdale Local" farewell run of Gas Motor Car #21, Jamestown-Oakdale CA, lv 1pm; $30 full trip, $7.50 part. Limited space. Call Don Hansen (415) 557-2984 (861-9971 eves). Sponsored by Pacific Locomotive Association.

CARS & CONSISTS

*LONE STAR, train 16, Kansas City Dec 28: engines 518, 526; cars 1168, 2758 "Palm Stream", 8055 "Silver Tureen", 4815, 9918, 9959, 9928, 3391, 2371 "Regal Vale", 1183, business cars ATSF 54, ATSF 50 "Santa Fe", ATSF 52 "Atchison", ATSF 89 track inspection car.

*LAKE SHORE LIMITED, train 49, NYC Dec 15: engines 485, 487 (FL9s); cars 3205 "Gulf Stream" as bag-dorm, 2025 "Loch Leven", 2832 "Keene Valley", 8335, 3336, 3956 snack bar coach as coach, 5668, 6439, 6421.

*PIONEER, train 25, Salt Lake City Dec 22: engine 217 (F40); cars 21171, 21262 (84-seaters), 21860 (60-seat), 20220 Amdinette, 21866, 21868 (60-seaters).

*EMPIRE BUILDER, train 7, Pasco WA Dec 24: engines BN 5758, Atk 247 (F40PHR), heater cars 672, 670 (ex-E units); cars 2262 "Placid Haven", 2659 "Silver Isle", 2671 "Silver Plateau", 8094, dome 9813 "Silver Cup", dome 9455 "Silver Saddle", 4549, dome 9484, dome 9472, dome 9458 "Silver Brand", dome 9362 "Mountain View" as coach, 6452, 5684, 5228, SP 6719, 1112.

*OCEAN, CN train 14, St. Lambert P.Q. Dec 23: 1st section: engines 6519 (FP9A), 6634 (F9B), 3105 (RS18), 15432 (VIA steam car); cars bag 9667, bag-dorm 9485, coaches 5293, 5421, 5622, 5201, 5602, cafe-lounge 750, Dayniters 5703, 5704, slprs "Grenmount", "Greenwich", "Pyramid Falls", diner 1348, club lounge "Soiree", slprs "Petitcodiac River", "Nashweak River", "Riviere du Loup". 2nd section: engines 6770 (FP4A), 6859 (FP4B), 3123 (RS18); cars bag-dorm 9488, coaches 5417, 5534, dinette 431, coaches 5390, 5294, 5499, slprs "Escuminac", "Naiscoat River", "Riviere Raquette", diner 1345, club lounge "Elegance", slpr "Pine Falls". Total of 31 cars--both sections sold out.

What to join

ADDITIONS & CORRECTIONS TO LIST OF RAIL PASSENGER ASSOCIATIONS OF LAST ISSUE:

Delaware Valley Association of Railroad Passengers, new address: PO Box 47, Bryn Mawr PA 19010.

Keystone Association of Railroad Passengers (KARP), PO Box 426 - Federal Square Station, Harrisburg PA 17108.

Massachusetts Association of Railroad Passengers (MARP), PO Box 2311, Boston MA 02107.

Southeastern Transportation Coalition, 2918 Houston Ave., Macon GA 31206 (formerly Georgia Association of Railroad Passengers).

RAIL FANTRIPS

Oct. 8-21, 1978: Mexico Railfan Fun Train, trip enters & lvs Mexico via Nuevo Laredo; incl. Copper Canyon, Trip of 1000 Wonders, NdeM shops, Pac. Rwy shops, Mexico subway, street cars etc. Midwest Travel, 2936 Bella Vista, Midwest City OK 73110.

Feb. 18-19: Shasta Daylight special Oakland-Eugene RT, rail connections also to So. Calif. Incl motel overnight. Lv Oakland 7:15am, return 9:30pm. $198 & up; $298 & up from So. Cal. Bay Area Elec. RR Assn, PO Box 3694, San Francisco CA 94119.

Apr. 1: Boston MA-Portland ME: Alco PA locos, 1st train of conv'l equip't in 18 yrs to Portland on B&M. Runbys, etc. $29.95 by Mar 1. Mass. Bay RR Enthusiasts Inc., Box 136 - Dept N, Ward Hill MA 01830. SPECIAL NOTE: This trip <u>not</u> cancelled, as erroneously indicated last issue.

One special Fantrips listing is free, subject to our editing. Send full info to: RAIL TRAVEL NEWS, FANTRIPS DEPT, PO Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

INDEX TO RTN, VOL. 7, 1977

An index to major news articles, features, and tables, excluding regular departments such as "Mixed Train of Thoughts". Each item gives issue identification and beginning page number. For example, "2Mar3" means Second March issue, page 3.

ACCIDENTS & DISASTERS: Floridian 1Jan3, 1Oct3; Freight crash 1Jul7; Inter-American 2Feb3; Johnstown PA flood 1Jul3; National Ltd 2Feb3; New York blackout 1Jul3; Night Owl 2Jan3; Pacific International 2May3, 2Jun10; Panama Ltd 2Aug15, 1Oct3; San Francisco Zephyr 2Aug15, 2Nov8; Southern Crescent 1Oct3; Southwest Ltd delayed 1Jul7; Starlight 1Mar3.
ALASKA RAIL TRAVEL: 1Jul8.
AMFLEET: On Coast Starlight 1Jan8; trains get sleepers 2Oct3; on Inter-American 2Jul13.
AMTRAK: Board nominations 2Oct3; car sale 1Nov15, 1Dec13; Finances 1Feb7, 2Jul6, 1Dec9; 5-year plan (1976) 2Jan8, (1977) 2Oct6; Operations changeover 1Jul3; Route structure revision 1Feb3; Western travel 1Apr6.
ARROWHEAD: 2Nov18; new extended 2Feb11, 1Mar10.
B&O 150th ANNIVERSARY: 1Mar11, 2May14.
BI-LEVEL CAR CONSTRUCTION: 1Feb11, 1May17, 1Jun16, 2Jun11, 1Jul6, 1Oct6.
BOOK REVIEWS: 2Oct2.
BROADWAY LTD 75th ANNIVERSARY: 1Jun3.
BUDGET, AMTRAK: 2Jan3, 2Jun3, 2Aug5, 1Oct3, 1Nov3, 1Nov4, 2Nov5.
BUSES: Amtrak & Greyhound 1Apr16; NAMBO new director 1Jun3; Pickets of Pioneer 2Jun13; Protest Amtrak fares 2Jun3.
CALIFORNIA: Rail Passenger Service Development: 2Feb12.
CANADIAN RAIL TRAVEL: 2May9; CP Rail across Canada 1Apr11; CP Rail Princess Cruise 1Jul8.
COLEMAN, SEC'Y: leaves office 1Jan9.
CONFERENCES: LRT 2Aug7; 2nd Rail Passenger 2Oct12.
CORRIDORS, EMERGING: 2Jan8.
CUTS: Amtrak train 1Aug3; San Joaquin 1Aug3; N.E. Corridor 2Aug4; Redcaps 2Aug5, postponed 2Oct3; 1Nov3; 1Nov18; restored 2Nov5; 1Dec3.
D&H ADIRONDACK: last run 2Mar9.
DEL MONTE: revival 2Apr9.
EDITORIALS: Need New Amtrak Division 2Mar8; Crisis at Amtrak 1Aug7; Our 20¢ worth for Amtrak 1Nov8; Action 78 1Dec9; Trains a people business 2Dec16; Manhattan Project 1Jan5.
ENERGY EFFICIENCY: train 2Apr7; fuel efficiency table, Amtrak 1Oct16.
EUROPE: On European Rails 2Feb7; British Transportation 1Jul4, 1Jul5.
FLORIDIAN DISCONTINUANCE: 2Jun3, 2Jul3, 1Aug9, 1Nov18.
GULF WIND, case for the 2Jan15.
HIGHWAYS, public supports de-emphasis 1Feb3.
HILLTOPPER, inaugural 1May3; 2May3; 2Jun6.
ILLINOIS ZEPHYR: 1Aug6.
INTER-AMERICAN goes Amfleet, 2Jul13.
LAKE SHORE LIMITED, missing 12 miles, 1Aug13, 1Oct8.
LOCOMOTIVES: French rejected 2Jun3; GG-1 rededication 2May6; SDP40F problems 1Jan11, 2Apr11, 2May12, 2Nov8.
LRC for Amtrak: 1Feb10, 1Mar10.
MOUNTAINEER, discontinued: 2Apr3, 1May3.
NATIONAL LIMITED, winter ride, 2Mar7.
NARP: 10th Anniversary 1Apr3; supports Amtrak funding 2Aug4; opposes car sale 1Nov15; and state association lists 1Dec11, 2Dec20.
NORTH COAST HIAWATHA, trip: 2Nov10.
NORTHLANDER: 2Nov16.
ON-TIME PERFORMANCE, Amtrak, 2May12.
PIONEER: Inaugural 2Mar3, 1May3, 2May3, 1Jun6; 2Dec12.
RAILROAD MERGER: SP & SCL, 1Dec3.
RATINGS, RTN train: 1Feb4, 2Jul10; reader comments 1Mar6, 2Apr14, 2Jun14, 2Dec8.
REISTRUP, PAUL: speeches 2Jul2, 2Oct4, 1Nov4.
RICHMOND, CA STATION: opens 1Nov12.
RIDERSHIP, Amtrak: 1Feb13, 1Apr10; 1Jul4, 2Nov9.
RILEY, J.W., renamed CARDINAL, 1Aug3.
RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR: 2Aug11.
RPO CAR, LAST RUN: 1Jul6, 2Jul8.
RTN, seventh anniversary: 2Nov14.
SAN DIEGAN, 5th train added, 2Mar3, 2Apr12.
SEATTLE-CHICAGO train revisions, 2Jul3.
SCHEDULE CHANGES, Amtrak: 1Apr14, 2Apr3, 2Dec5.
SOUTHERN CRESCENT, discontinuance 1Nov3.
SPECIAL TRAINS: "Peanut Special" 1Jan3; to B&O anniv. dinner 1Mar11; 4449 excursion 2Jan11, 2Mar3, 2Apr3, 1May7; pre-transcon excursion, 4449: 2Mar3; 4449 excursion 2Feb3; Chessie steam excursion 2May14; NRHS convention trip 2Aug14; 8444 trip 2Oct9.
SYSTEMWIDE TRAVEL, Amtrak 2Mar11, 2Jun8; European rides Amtrak 1Oct9.
TRAIN OF THE YEAR: 2Dec12.
TRANSIT, PUBLIC: B&M on South Shore 1Feb12; B&M to Providence 2Feb17; and Carter 2Dec5; Cleveland-Youngstown last runs 2Feb14; Edmonton LRT test 1Dec6; Edmonton subway construction 1Mar11; and Energy plan, Carter, 1Apr3; South Shore Interurban 2Mar16; Washington DC Metro line opening 1Jul11; Winter on B&M 1Jan12.
TURBOS ON ADIRONDACK: 1Feb11.
VIA RAIL CANADA: 1Mar9.
WHITE PASS & YUKON: 1Jul8.
WINTER PROBLEMS, Amtrak: 1Jan10, 2Jan3, 2Jan5, 1Mar3, 2Nov8, 1Dec14; Winter on B&M 1Jan12.

QUOTES OF THE WEEK***

"Though the President has shown some lukewarm support for using energy taxes for transit, he and his aides have generally given short shrift to the role of transit in conserving energy... So when it comes to waging 'the moral equivalent of war,' it seems only sensible to use every weapon available--expanded public transportation, along with more efficient cars, better insulation of buildings, and the like. Mass transit deserves more consideration than the Carter administration has given it, if the President cares about conserving energy for the long run."

--Albert R. Karr in Wall Street Journal, Dec 30.

SLIP OF THE MONTH CLUB***

"'The dining car on my train down here was built in 1930. The newest of our Pullman cars was built in 1926,' Reistrup said. 'We are running a train system with outdated equipment, like asking airline passengers in the 1970s to ride in DC-3 aircraft.'"

--Amtrak President Paul Reistrup quoted in Orlando (FL) Sentinel Star, Dec 17.

(But the clerestory windows all have the latest type of Lexan.)

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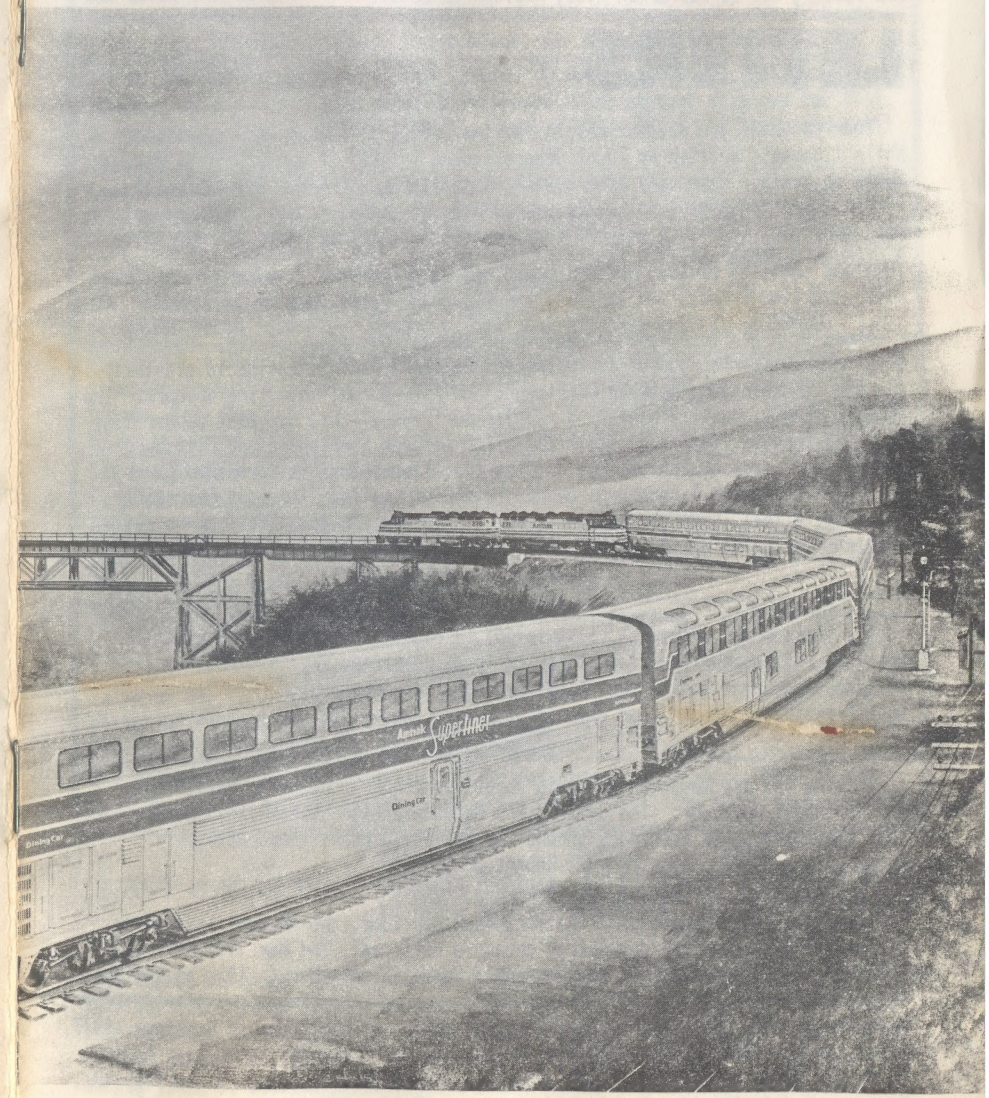

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